

MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023 – 1:00 PM
OCONTO COUNTY LIBRARY PLANNING COMMITTEE
OCONTO FALLS COMMUNITY LIBRARY 251 N. MAIN STREET, OCONTO FALLS, WI 54154
www.co.oconto.wi.us
(Draft minutes, not approved by Committee)

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Debra Schroeder, Farnsworth Public Library Rep; Judy Patenaude, Lena Public Library Rep; Dawn Byars, Gillett Public Library Rep; Kathleen Marsh, Lakes Country Library Rep; Susan Mogged, Oconto Falls Library Rep; Joan Denis, Nicolet Federated Library Systems Board Rep; Al Sleeter, Administration Committee Rep; David Parmentier, County Board Supervisor Rep; LoAnn Elbe, Suring Library Rep; Vicki Gooding, Library Services Board Rep; Tom Bitters, County Board Supervisor Rep

COMMITTEE ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Erik Pritzl, County Administrator; Kim Pytleski, County Clerk; Beth Trudell; Elizabeth Paape; Shanon Stoner; Bonnie Hearly; Amy Peterson, Farnsworth Public Library; Katie Essermann, Lakes Country Library; Rachel Pascoe, Oconto Falls Library; April De La Ruelle, Lena Public Library; Jill Trochta, Suring Public Library; Ben Pytleski, Lena Public Library; Lori Repinski; Pat Scanlan; Jean Grosse; Candie Lehto; Linda McKenna; Tracy Vreeke; Peter Wills; Tracy Merges; Judy Kostreva

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Schroeder called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
Reviewed rules and made introductions.

2. Approval of Agenda

2.1. Change of Sequence – None.

2.2. Removal of Items – None.

Motion by Patenaude/Mogged to approve the agenda. The motion was voted on and carried.

3. Communications – None.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Proceedings

Motion by Patenaude/Elbe to approve the October 04, 2023 minutes/proceedings. The motion was voted on and carried.

5. Discuss Library Structure Options

5.1. County creates a consolidated system with a new branch for unserved municipalities only

Erik Pritzl, County Administrator, updated the committee on the Little Suamico Library proposal meeting, data gathered from working with Nicolet Federated Library System (NFLS) pertaining to operations and circulations, and discussed the costs of operating a library. Discussion followed.

5.2. County creates a consolidated system with unserved municipalities and acquires an existing branch(s)

Pritzl explained the funding sources of a consolidated system for unserved municipalities if an existing branch was utilized. Lakes County Public Library was used as an example. Kim Pytleski, County Clerk, used data from the spreadsheet used in prior meetings to explain the numbers change when the funding source changes. Funding for a consolidated library would come from unserved municipalities and a current municipal library. A municipal library that has formed joint agreements vs one that has not, determines what funding sources are available. Any changes to funding sources possibilities is a change to the entire structure. Discussion followed.

5.3 Full consolidation model (at current operational funding levels)

Pritzl explained how consolidated libraries are funded and Pytleski explained how the structure would look at the current funding levels. Discussion followed. A consolidated library system would be a department of the county and the funding request would be part of the budget process vs the current model of requests from libraries based on the current library plan. Discussion followed.

5.4 Joint libraries across the county (at current operational funding levels)

Pytleski reviewed the current joint library agreements, what a change to the joint agreements could look like, and the need to review the current funding obligations of municipalities that have been in a joint agreement for many years. Discussion followed.

Committee discussed all four of the options above: current library tiers/grades and how a change in the joint agreements would also change the population served; thus changing the tiers/grades of the libraries; librarian qualifications are based on the tier/grade of the library they serve; if the state has the ability to grandfather current library directors, how these changes would affect future hires; the library plan percentage of 2.1%; how libraries create budgets currently; the Brown County bill; circulations; consolidation with some, but not all of the existing libraries; option of a North/South branch working together; the 2024 operating budget needs; and asked the “why” behind making any of these decisions. Chair Schroeder gave each member 90 seconds to speak regarding their thoughts and feelings of the process so far and where they would like the process to focus going forward. There was a consensus to explore a fully consolidated model and county consolidated/joint agreement mix.

6. Identify Future Agenda Items

- County led update to joint agreements
- Full County consolidated model
- Option of a southern branch
- Discuss funding: County Department, local library boards, exemption qualifications
- Changes to the formula/language of current plan
- Discuss how the committee will pick a path forward

7. Announcements/General Information (No action to be taken)

Erik Pritzl, County Administrator, informed the committee of his resignation effective 02/07/2024.

8. Select a Date/Location for the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. in Lena.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Sleeter/Patenaude to adjourn at 3:43 p.m. The motion was voted on and carried.

Kim Pytleski, Recorder

kp/Date Posted: 12/01/2023